

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-2 and 5-21 are pending in the application.

Claim 7 was objected to as depending from canceled claim 3. Claim 7 has been amended to depend from claim 1. Applicant respectfully requests that claim 7 be examined.

Claims 1, 2, 5 and 6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 5,658,298 to Vincent et al. (“Vincent”). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection as follows.

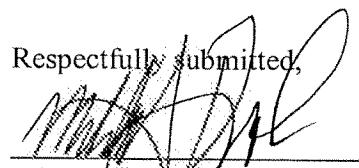
It is respectfully submitted that Vincent does not teach or suggest a first end part including a reinforcement flange and a sleeve, as recited in independent claims 1 and 5. First, Vincent does not disclose a reinforcement flange. Applicant respectfully submits that neither locking means 13 nor buckle 14 of Vincent is a reinforcement flange, and there are no other features of the Vincent device that could be deemed reinforcement flanges. Moreover, to the extent the Examiner believes that locking means 13 of Vincent may be considered a reinforcement flange, it is not located on the same end part of the device as the sleeve, as recited in independent claim 1. Rather, locking means 13 is at or near the distal end of the Vincent device and conduit 15 is at the proximal end. *See* Vincent at FIGS. 1 and 2 and col. 2, lines 57-59 (“A locking means 13 engages a buckle 14 on the proximal end of the band 10 when the distal end 11 is pulled through the tunnel or conduit 15 within the buckle 14”). It is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 5 and the claims that depend therefrom are patentable over Vincent for at least the reasons discussed above.

The Examiner’s attention is directed to new claims 13-20, which are believed patentable over Vincent for at least the following reasons. As discussed above, Vincent does not teach or suggest one or more reinforcement flanges, as recited in independent claim 13. In addition, Vincent does not teach or suggest the flanges positioned at different locations of a sleeve or tab holes, as recited in claims 15-17.

It is believed that all objections and rejections in the application have been addressed and that the present application is in condition for allowance. A favorable reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims is solicited. If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this and concurrent replies to charge payment (or credit any overpayment) to Deposit Account No. 50-2298 for any additional required fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

  
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